

RADIO

FALL 1975

\$1.25

HISTORIAN



Reflections of the Radio Era

Find the names of the singers heard on early radio.

Gene Austin	Cliff Edwards	Harry Richman
Kenny Baker	Eileen Farrell	Lanny Ross
Irene Bordoni	Harry Frankel	Julia Sanderson
Phil Cook	Ernie Hare	Whispering Jack Smith
Frank Crummit	Billy Jones	Kate Smith
Vaughn de Leath	Edward McHugh	John Charles Thomas
Vivienne Della Chiesa	Frank Munn	Arthur Tracy
Morton Downey	Frank Parker	Joseph M. White
Jessica Dragonette	Lily Pons	Irene Wicker

CHORRNSBHEAIREOLNEUTERKEKNILLW
 EIMGAETTENOGARDACISSEJZAWMWAWK
 PRELLDKEARIDEILIKOAEUOTOTRHEEN
 AECAJASCHNERUTYILNVDYEWATEIEWU
 YNHPOERDNJJJOHNCHARLESTHOMASLMM
 OESOSANAIONRANASEMRMLKIPONPINN
 LBIHEEDWTNHFCIRHRSIAPUHASKEESO
 NODPPNAMSTILSKTNETDAEUIULDDRTAW
 ARERHKEYOUUKRHNREHANILMUNRNIAIS
 LDTUMDERAANATYULETKCSOLLAANSO
 UOCLWHDTEKARRAHHIGORASIAWRGENS
 INLAHABONBNBAATFIOKATEANDOJIRI
 SISAIRENEWICKERNKODKNIBNEEAHEH
 HCLLTRRDGALHIRAFRCKATYSYFOCCAC
 SIGNEYAONDLEGAWODRIKHUEEFTKAMJ
 RBOYEFSWIRADIOHISTORIANLILSLUF
 TIHNARCNNLLTSNOPYLILEBNELLAMLHR
 SLEIGAHEIURFRANKPARKERVECWIEUA
 ILRRENIYKEYRAFMGRYZRLEJYAAATDCN
 MIAAMKEEKTHAMKDHOWONAEMASZHEHK
 LEHISEFAEKANEBNXCHSROSEAROMNSC
 OJERALBLBINKLJCIVIPIVLNZIEHNNR
 JOIUNYHGUHOCMDRAWDERTODENPTAENU
 KNNANSTNIAAGUOCNEHURYEDAIELIIAM
 EERNLPHERIENAEISROERRWDAAKOVOM
 CSEAHRLREIELNLNBTWNSDERESULNILI
 RKLBCSNAAEENLRTHSSORYNNALCPKVRT
 ZUNNRIANNBEEIREENELILYPHILPCAL
 GALEEILEENFARRELLAENWDPRETREM
 KNOLIUA KPILNEADHTAELEDNHGUAVYZ

CARDS & LETTERS

note that our organization has a new address listed below:

NARA
 c/o R. W. Hill
 1231 Grove St. No. 11
 San Francisco CA 94117

In the Spring issue of RADIO HISTORIAN, the matter of trading ethics came up in "Next Question Please" regarding publishing the names of individuals who advertise as traders but do not send tapes after the have received the one they requested. What about the individual who sends back "white box" or other low quality tape to replace a tape of reasonably good quality?

I had this happen with (a subscriber) who for a short time was a member of a trading group and he did the same thing with others in that group and as a result, he was dropped because of the complaints. I make every effort to erase and return the same tape and mailer, if that taper will use only a specific brand of tape. Or I replace it as requested, if unable to dub the tape. I also let people know exactly what to expect of me in the way I want material, as to how it is recorded, speed and how it is to be mailed back and the kind of tape I use. Yes, it takes a letter or postal card, but it does let people know exactly where I stand. In over 20 years of taping I have very few complaints.

Alice L. Bethel
 18431 Van Ess Ave.
 Torrance CA 90504

In your summer 1975 issue of RADIO HISTORIAN, on page 25, Ms. Sue Cook asked for the address of North American Radio Archives. Please

RADIO HISTORIAN looks good. The subject is capable of sustaining an interesting publication.

Barry Bernard
 5245 N.E. Rodney I
 Portland OR 97211

I am a charter subscriber to RADIO HISTORIAN and a very pleased one. I have brought the magazine to the attention of other OTR enthusiasts and to several public libraries. I think you, Mr. Heup, and Mr. Fintak are doing an admirable job and providing a real service to all who treasure the golden age of radio.

The best of all good personal wishes.

Arthur A. Delaney
 Roslyn, NY

Noticing the recent popularity of the best seller "The Seven-per-cent Solution", a supposedly undiscovered Sherlock Holmes story, perhaps old time radio fans can look forward to a resurgence of Holmes-Watson shows on radio. Many shows featuring several acting combinations are available for broadcast and trading.

Don Pagel
 Milwaukee, WI



a word from our sponsor

It's been our experience (and apparently the experience of some of our subscribers, judging from comments we've received) that whether one is a trader, fan or seller of Old Time Radio the number one pet peeve is the failure to answer correspondence promptly.

Not that we at RADIO HISTORIAN are trying to set ourselves up as models of promptness, at least the effort is always made to answer all inquiries and letters as soon as we possibly can.

Since time spent on a person's regular job rightfully comes before that devoted to a hobby, we realize that some time may be lost in sending off a reply. But we also feel that every effort should be made to allow as little time as possible to elapse before answering. Really, it's only common courtesy.

Replying to letters is one thing but procrastinating on tape trades is even more

serious. We've heard from a number of subscribers who have been miffed about the time it took to receive tapes owed them in trade. Some have never gotten their tapes and have asked that we publish names of those who have failed to complete a tape exchange. We don't feel that this should be one of our functions at RADIO HISTORIAN but we surely can't condone the practice on any grounds. This issue of RADIO HISTORIAN contains a letter to your Editor which we have quoted directly from a copy that was sent to us and other publications. It is self-explanatory and deals with the problem of non-existent communications. Poor quality recordings are one problem, dragging your feet is another, but not satisfactorily completing a trade is almost impossible to reconcile.

Thomas J. Wegner

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FALL 1975

FILM DOCUMENTARY OF OTR	6
8 TRACK AND OTR	8
DEATHS OF FAMOUS RADIO PERSONALITIES	10
USING YOUR TAPE COUNTER	12
RADIO BANDS	18
RADIO THROUGH THE YEARS	20
FRANK MUNN	23
DEPARTMENTS:	
PUZZLE	2
CARDS AND LETTERS	3
EDITORIAL	4
ON THE MARKET	8
SPINNING THE DIAL	24
ON THE AIR	25
BUY-SELL-TRADE	26

ON THE COVER: Tony Randall.....a familiar face in the entertainment world, as the star of the television series "The Odd Couple". Tony is just as well known to Old Time Radio fans as Reggie York in the "I Love A Mystery" series. (Drawing by Mary Beth Heup)

A FILM DOCUMENTARY OF OTR

Dr. Arthur Delany, Coordinator of Educational Communications for the New York school system gives his views on a new film dealing with the great radio comedians of the 30's and 40's.

If one studies the various indexes to educational and other types of non-theatrical motion pictures, he may notice that there is a paucity of films dealing with the subject of yesterday's radio. Several attempts were made in the old days to produce films that documented radio history. The few that were successful have long been out of print. There are two reasons for the current lack of such films. First, the popular interest today seems to be inclined towards film's sister medium, TV, and second, it has always been difficult to produce a motion picture - a primarily visual medium - about a subject that deals in imagination via sound. Radio is a medium; motion pictures combine media.

Recently the writer was privileged to view critically for Film News, an international review of audiovisual materials and equipment, a set of motion pictures entitled The Great Radio Comedians. And it is his desire to bring notice of this effort to the attention of OTR enthusiasts and to borrow with

permission of Film News from his review.

The Great Radio Comedians is a much needed film and a honey of a show. It is also a challenging subject for the film maker - its subject is radio, an aural medium. To have given it visualization is a nice trick, and the producers pull it off admirably with the assistance of the great radio comedians themselves, a marvelous array of still photographs, some fascinating old E.T.s, and the active support of a few ancient Atwater Kents, Supereheterodynes, and Philcos.

The era of the great radio comedians was short-lived: it bloomed in the Thirties, flourished during the Forties, and died with a whimper when television appeared on the American scene. This film resurrects that golden age for 88 minutes by reminiscing on camera with four famous radio comedians of the period: George Burns, Edgar Bergen, Jack Benny, and Jim Jordan (Fibber McGee). They have much to say about their once top-rated shows: how their acts were originated, how their characterizations

developed, and the types of humor they used. In each case the comedian recalls anecdotes and attempts to analyze the reasons why his act was popular.

Important comedians of the 40's who had passed on prior to production are also portrayed in a most tasteful way by means of film clips. The greatest of these, Fred Allen, is recreated through an off-screen impersonation, with his old comedy crew reassembled on screen. The imitation of Allen doesn't work and the "Allen's Alley" skit, written by Harry Bailey of the original show, falls flat; but fortunately, the real Fred Allen also appears on screen by means of an interview filmed long ago. A highlight of the film is a fast-moving vignette of Allen's humor. Sample: "A network vice-president is a man who comes into his office and finds a molehill on his desk. He has until five o'clock to make that molehill into a mountain".

The Great Radio Comedians is more than a look at five famous routines - it is a documentary of life as it was in their era. The Depression, the war, and ultimately the serene boredom which earmarked the Fifties are reflected and chronicled in terms of fashion, language, and pop culture, Newsreels, photographs, and recordings of the songs of the day nos-

talgically bring back their era.

The photography and sound of The Great Radio Comedians are both excellent. Never before has this reviewer seen a more skillful juxtaposition of clips and other visual matter. If only the original clips had represented in each case the true highlights of the acts (rather than those that just happened to have been filmed at the time), the present-day viewer would be left with a better appreciation of the comedy.

It is unfortunate, for example, that Jack Benny is represented by a youthful clip in which he tells an interminably long joke with a poor punch line. And to say that Edgar Bergen's lips move visibly would be missing the point of this film. It is not the intention of The Great Radio Comedians to make its viewers roll in the aisles, but rather, to reflect on an era which is worth remembering. The end of the film makes the viewer thirst for more - perhaps a sequel on the Great Radio Heroes!

The Great Radio Comedians is produced in three parts, filmed in color and black and white. It is distributed on a purchase or rental basis by Contemporary/McGraw-Hill Films, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020. The film has values for teaching junior and senior high school social studies and

Continued on page 27

ON THE MARKET

Every OTR buff who is really involved in the hobby does not merely confine his activities to collecting shows. He makes every effort to further his knowledge in all areas of the subject. This individual will find AMERICAN BROADCASTING by Lawrence W. Lichty and Malachi C. Topping to be one of the most complete sources of information ever to appear in print.

AMERICAN BROADCASTING covers all phases of broadcasting from its primitive beginnings to present day television. The book is not merely a chronological "blow-by-blow" recap of the history of broadcasting. It goes far deeper into the technology, economics, and the social impact of broadcasting.

Actually the book is a compilation of essays and monographs by many different authors. According to the authors, AMERICAN BROADCASTING was eight years in the making. In truth we would have to say that the total man-hours that went into research and preparation are immeasurable.

A few of the hundreds of subjects covered are: Early History of Network Broad-

casting; Story of the Super-Hetrodyne; H.V. Kaltenborn and His Sponsors; How The U.S. Heard About Pearl Harbor; The Radio Mystery; Lux Radio Theater etc. This does not begin to describe the vast amount of data found in the 723 pages of AMERICAN BROADCASTING. The bibliography alone is a valuable part of the book if you are really interested in researching the subject of OTR.

We highly recommend AMERICAN BROADCASTING as a sound investment and a welcome addition to the library of every OTR buff. It is available through Hastings House Publishers, Inc. 10 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. Price is \$15.00 per copy in soft cover binding.

8 TRACK AND OTR!

Now that you have blanched in utter disbelief after reading the title of this article, we should at this time mention one thing; we do not advocate or recommend the use of 8-track cartridges for storing a permanent collection of OTR shows. Nevertheless there is a place for this type of tape cartridge in

our hobby.

The 8-track cartridge was developed primarily for use in automobiles. Although most 8-track players have a button for changing tracks, there is usually no provision for fast-forward or rewind. Thus a driver can keep his attention on the road ahead instead of worrying about a tape that has reached the end, or trying to locate a certain point on the tape. An 8-track tape is endless and moves in one direction only.

Although locating a certain show might be somewhat inconvenient, there are advantages to offset this. Cartridges come in various lengths. The 90 minute tape is probably best for our needs.

OTR is supposed to be entertaining. What better way to pass the time on long trips (or short ones, too) than to be able to listen to OTR in your car. The procedure is simple. Merely pick out a favorite track on an 1800' reel and record it non-stop on the cartridge. Don't forget to start at the beginning of the tape. When you see the silver metallic strip showing in the cartridge opening you are at the start. Set the recorder for track one and you're all ready to go. You can do this with the speakers turned off (or while you take your wife shopping) so you don't hear them until you are

ready to play them in your car.

A 90 minute cartridge actually is only 22 1/2 minutes long. However the automatic changing of tracks provides for the tape going through the machine 4 times before it starts repeating. Hence the total of 90 minutes. This means that three times during the hour-and-a-half program, you will notice an audible click when the track changes.

Since these changes are 22 1/2 minutes apart you can see that they will occur during (not between) any thirty or sixty minute shows. This is why 8-track is definitely not suited for permanent OTR collections. But for temporary copies to be used in your automobile this is not a critical problem. After you have played the tapes you will probably want to use them over again for different shows anyway. As a convenience and time saver you could make up about a half dozen cartridges. After you have played them it might be possible to locate others with the same idea and simply trade.

Here again we would suggest caution. Eight-track trading should be a kind of "mutual lending library". A very definite distinction should be made between this and trading for

permanent collections.

We recently made up six cartridges this way. Some of the shows have never been heard by us. Others were heard so long ago that it is unlikely that the program content will be remembered. In any event we are looking forward to about nine hours of OTR during an upcoming automobile trip. Who knows? 55 mph on the Interstate might even turn out to be fun!

When we get back home again we might put some other shows on the same tapes. Or we might try to negotiate a trade with someone else who has the same idea.

Incidentally, anyone interested in this type of activity can write to RADIO HISTORIAN. In fact we will list you in the swappers column with an "8" after your name. No charge for this service.

Please note our change of address and use the new one in all future correspondence. It is:

RADIO HISTORIAN
4912 N. Idlewild Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53217

Deaths of Famous Radio Personalities

James E. Jewell, creator of radio adventure stories, died Tuesday, Aug. 5, 1975 in Chicago. Dubbed "Dean of the Adventure Stories", he wrote, produced, and directed "The Lone Ranger", "The Green Hornet", and "Jack Armstrong, The All American Boy". He was 69.

Ozzie Nelson, one-time band leader, died Tuesday, June 3, 1975 of cancer. The band played on Joe Penner and Red Skelton shows. Ozzie, born Oswald George Nelson, and wife Harriet, started "Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" in 1944. Show switched to television in 1952. He was 69.

Morgan Beatty, prominent news broadcaster on NBC for 25 years, died Friday, August 1, 1975 while at his vacation home in St. John's, Antigua. He was 72.

James Clell Summey better known as "Cousin Jody" veteran of Nashville's Grand Ole Opry died Monday, Aug. 18, 1975 at age 61. He joined the "Opry" in 1938 as a steel guitar sideman and later developed his own solo comedy routine.

SPECIAL REPRINT OF OUR FIRST ISSUE TO BE MADE

Since so many of our subscribers have asked about back issues of RADIO HISTORIAN, we've decided to take orders for a reprinting of our first issue: Winter 1974. In fact, we've been quite flattered that this back issue is in such demand.

So starting immediately we will take orders for issue #1. If we get enough response we will have enough reprints made to meet however many orders we receive plus a few more for our files. Reprints will cost \$2.50 because of the smaller order we'll be forwarding to our printer. Just send your name and address in a note along with a check or money order for \$2.50 to:

RADIO HISTORIAN
4912 N. Idlewild Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53217

(Please note our new address).

We will hold the orders for a couple weeks until we see how much of a response we get and then, if it's large enough we will have the additional copies printed and mail them to you. Printing takes about a week, so within a month after we receive your or-

der you should be getting the back issue in the mail.

So if you're interested, send us \$2.50, along with your return address and we'll do our best to reprint our Winter '74 issue. If orders don't warrant the reprinting, your money will be refunded.

If we receive as many orders as hoped for we'll do the same reprinting of Issue #2, Spring 1975.

■ ■

CAPT. MIDNIGHT SERIES BEGINS IN NEXT ISSUE.

Beginning in our next issue we'll carry a serialized history of one of OTR's most popular daytime adventure shows, "Captain Midnight". The article was contributed by Jimmy Thornton of New York City. To us, it seems to be a well written, well thought out, and complete story about the famed hero of the air. We found it highly entertaining and extremely interesting and are sure you will enjoy it as much as we did.

■ ■

USING THE COUNTER ON YOUR RECORDER TO MEASURE TAPE

This quick, easy, and fairly accurate method to determining actual length of tape on a reel will save a lot of time and help avoid repeats in dubbing due to running out of tape during the last few minutes of a show.

Contrary to popular belief, the counter on your tape recorder does not necessarily give an accurate reading of the tape footage that goes through the machine. On some higher priced recorders the counter might be activated through a mechanical linkage with the capstan or pinch roller. These are generally calibrated to pace off actual footage. However, the counter on most low or medium priced recorders is most likely linked to either the take-up spindle on the right hand side or the storage spindle on the left. This can be determined very easily. With the power switch OFF merely turn the lever to REWIND. Manually rotate an empty reel on the take-up side in a counter-clockwise direction. If the counter is linked to this spindle it will start to register. If not, try the storage spindle. Put this spindle in a "free-wheeling" configuration by turning the lever to FORWARD. If you don't get a reading here when rotating in a counter clockwise direction, the counter is probably hooked up to the capstan or pinch roller mechanism.

One way to get a measurement is to time a tape for its entire length. Then, of course, it becomes necessary to accurately time the material as it goes on the tape. But this takes a lot of time when your recorder could be better used for dubbing or just plain listening.

The next time you are operating your recorder take a close look at the rotating reels. At the beginning of a tape the right hand reel will be moving much faster than the left. About half way through the tape both reels will be revolving at about the same speed. As you get near the end the left hand reel will be moving much faster than the right. All the while this is happening the tape, which is controlled by the pinch roller and capstan, is moving past the heads at a fixed rate of speed.

This is why it is impossible for the counter to give an accurate reading of tape length. At the beginning the take-up reel goes around many more times for a given length of tape

than at the end. The exact opposite is true for the storage reel. Since the counter that is geared to either of the spindles is calibrated to the actual revolutions, it can normally serve only as a reference to certain points on the tape. However, through the use of fairly simple mathematics, the counter can be employed to give a reasonably accurate measurement of total tape length as well as remaining time.

Another popular misconception is that the actual length of tape is exactly as shown on the box. We have seen "1800 footers" run as high as 2000' and as low as 1600'. This, of course meant a lot of wasted tape or "do-overs" because of running out of tape too soon. Add to this the fact that many half-hour shows are really shorter because of deleted commercials and you can see where the right combination could allow you to put four shows on a side instead of three. Beforehand knowledge of whether or not this can be done on that next reel can be very handy indeed.

The center of a 7" reel is two and one-quarter inches in diameter. Thus the first revolution of tape winding on the take-up reel is approximately seven inches ($\pi \times 2.25$). This gradually increases as the reel fills up, to about twenty inches per revolution at the end of the tape. Rather

than go into the mathematics for each revolution, we have provided a chart on pages 14 and 15. This chart is based on revolutions so it is necessary that this be converted to counter readings for your particular machine. Before the thought of mathematical calculations frightens you away from this little project, please be assured that this is a one time only situation and once it is done you need not be concerned with it anymore.

Here's how it's done: Free-up the spindle that is connected to the counter as described previously for finding out just how the counter is activated. Now put any reference point on the reel at "12 o'clock". This reference can be a label, imprint, or anything else that will show how many times the reel revolves. Now rotate the reel 50, 100, 200 or more times. This can be done manually, or if you have a quick eye, set the machine at its slowest speed and let the motor do it. Remember, the larger the number of revolutions the more accurate the calculation will be. On one of our machines the counter registered 383 after three hundred actual revolutions. This breaks down to a counter reading of 63.9 per 50 revolutions. Another machine showed a counter reading of 136 after four hundred revolutions. This comes out to 17 per 50 revolutions. From this you can probably get the idea of how the count-

COUNTER	TRUE REVOLUTIONS	1/2 MIL TAPE				1 MIL TAPE				1 1/2 MIL TAPE			
		FEET	MINUTES			FEET	MINUTES			FEET	MINUTES		
			TAPE SPEED				TAPE SPEED				TAPE SPEED		
			1 7/8	3 3/4	7 1/2		1 7/8	3 3/4	7 1/2		1 7/8	3 3/4	7 1/2
50	30	3.0	1.5	.75	30	3.0	1.5	.75	30	3.0	1.5	.75	
100	61	6	3	1.5	62	7	3	1.5	64	7	3.5	1.75	
150	93	10	5	2	96	10	5	2.5	99	11	5	2.5	
200	127	14	7	3	132	14	7	3.5	137	15	7	3.5	
250	161	17	9	4	169	18	9	4.5	177	19	9	5	
300	196	21	10	5	208	22	11	5.5	220	23	12	6	
350	233	25	12	6	249	27	13	7	265	28	14	7	
400	270	29	14	7	291	31	16	8	312	33	17	8	
450	309	33	16	8	336	36	18	9	362	39	19	10	
500	349	37	19	9	382	41	20	10	415	44	22	11	
550	390	42	21	10	429	46	23	11	469	50	25	12	
600	432	46	23	12	479	51	26	13	526	56	28	14	
650	475	51	25	13	530	57	28	14	586	62	31	16	
700	519	55	28	14	583	62	31	16	647	69	34	17	
750	564	60	30	15	638	68	34	17	712	76	38	19	
800	610	65	33	16	694	74	37	19	778	83	41	21	
850	658	70	35	18	753	80	40	20	847	90	45	23	
900	706	75	39	19	812	90	45	22	919	98	49	24	
950	756	80	40	20	874	93	47	23	992	106	53	26	
1000	807	86	43	22	938	100	50	25	1069	114	57	28	
1050	858	92	46	23	1003	107	53	27	1147	122	61	31	
1100	911	97	49	24	1070	114	57	29	1228	131	65	33	
1150	965	103	51	26	1138	121	61	30	1312	140	70	35	
1200	1020	109	54	27	1209	129	64	32	1397	149	74	37	
1250	1076	115	57	29	1281	137	68	34					
1300	1133	121	60	30	1355	145	72	36					
1350	1192	127	64	32	1430	153	76	38					
1400	1251	133	67	33	1508	160	80	40					
1450	1311	140	70	35	1587	169	85	42					
1500	1373	146	73	37	1668	178	89	44					
1550	1435	153	77	38	1750	187	93	47					
1600	1499	160	80	40	1834	196	98	49					
1650	1564	167	83	42	1920	205	102	51					
1700	1630	174	87	43	2003	214	107	54					
1750	1697	181	91	45	2098	224	112	56					
1800	1765	188	94	47	2189	233	117	58					
1850	1834	196	98	49									
1900	1904	203	102	51									
1950	1975	211	105	53									
2000	2048	218	109	55									
2050	2121	226	113	57									
2100	2196	234	117	59									
2150	2271	242	121	61									
2200	2348	250	125	63									
2250	2426	259	129	65									
2300	2505	267	134	67									
2350	2585	276	138	69									
2400	2666	284	142	71									

er on your machine can be related to every 50 actual revolutions. For those of you who are somewhat mathematically inclined here's the formula:

$$F = \frac{C \times 50}{R}$$

C is the counter reading for a known number of actual revolutions.

R is the known number of revolutions.

F is the factor to be applied to each increment on the chart.

Let's follow the formula through:

On the first machine the counter reads 383 for 300 revolutions.

$$F = \frac{383 \times 50}{300} \quad \text{or } 63.9$$

On the chart we can now enter 64 for 50 revolutions, 128 for 100, 192 for 150, 256 for 200 etc. Bear in mind that these numbers are examples only and the actual numbers you use will depend on the readings you get on the counter of your own machine. It is suggested that the base calculation be carried out to at least one decimal place but the entry on the chart can be to the nearest whole number.

On the second machine:

$$F = \frac{136 \times 50}{400} \quad \text{or } 17.0$$

Thus the entries on the chart would be 17, 34, 51, 68 etc.

That's the end of the math lesson. Now we can get down to the use of the chart. The chart is used for recorders having the counter activated by the take-up reel as well as those utilizing the storage reel. However, due to some rather complex peculiarities regarding ascending vs. descending spirals, the procedure for each is somewhat different.

If your counter is activated by the take-up reel:

1. Set counter at ZERO and run entire tape thru on FAST FWD. and note counter reading for entire tape.

2. Recording in the usual manner can now be started, making sure the counter is again set at ZERO.

3. When you reach a point where you want to determine how much time you have left (such as after one or two shows) put the machine in the PAUSE mode, and take the counter reading.

4. Locate the nearest corresponding counter reading on the chart and move to the right to the appropriate footage and time for the tape thickness and speed you are using.

5. Now locate the near-

est counter reading on the chart for the whole tape and determine the total footage and time in a similar manner. The difference between this figure and the one in step 4 is the footage and time remaining.

If your counter is activated by the storage reel:

1. 2. and 3. are the same as above.

4. Subtract the counter reading at this point from the counter reading for the entire tape.

5. Using this net difference, find the closest reading on the chart. Move over to the appropriate column for the tape thickness and speed you are using. This gives you the feet and time remaining.

This system is accurate enough, from a practical standpoint, to enable you to find out beforehand if you have enough tape to complete a show. While a margin of error is built into the system that will minimize the possibility of over estimating remaining time, it is always a good idea to decrease your calculated figure by one or two minutes.

Editors note: We would like to thank Tim Heup for his assistance in the preparation of this article. Tim is a senior in the School of Engineering at the Uni-

versity of Wisconsin Milwaukee. He determined how the appropriate mathematical formulae could be applied to our particular situation. Tim spent many hours punching buttons on his handy Hewlett-Packard in order to develop the specific numbers and values shown on the chart. He spent many additional hours running tests and cross-checking the figures.

■ ■

On September 9, 1926, the National Broadcasting Company was incorporated under the laws of Delaware. Its debut was on November 15, 1926, ushering in the network era.

NBC operated as two networks, the red and the blue. The terms red and blue were coined when RCA chief engineer Alfred N. Goldsmith and AT&T operations engineer Elam Miller were en route to Washington, DC shortly before NBC was formed. Using blank maps of the United States, they drew on these maps the networks they hoped would come into existence based on WEAf and WJZ.

WEAF stations and connections were drawn in red pencil (RED NETWORK) and the WJZ stations and connections were drawn in blue pencil (BLUE NETWORK).

In 1943, NBC sold the blue network. WJZ was still the key station in the network. Thus, the blue network became the American Broadcasting Company.

Radio Bands

"I didn't mind at all when someone would call up and ask if I were the guy who sang like Rudy Vallee". So said the man who led one of the most popular sweet bands in the 1930's....Ozzie Nelson.

Together with Harriet Hilliard, vocalist with his band and later his wife, the Ozzie Nelson band entertained in ballrooms and on radio from 1930 through the mid-1940's. Ranked among the most popular of the sweet bands, it was always a favorite with the listeners.

Ozzie, born Oswald George Nelson on March 20, 1906 in Jersey City, started in amateur musicals with his parents at the age of 5. He played banjo and sang with a high school band. He played football and lacrosse, and had swum and boxed when he attended Rutgers University. After Rutgers came Jersey City Law School.

The choice between law and music had to be made. His band was a hit so he chose music over law as a career.

The band played the 1932 summer season at the Glen Island Casino, its first big date nationally. 1932 was also the year Harriet Hilliard joined the band as vocalist. Both Ozzie and Harriet had their solos,

but as a romantic duet they were most effective. So effective in fact that on October 8, 1935 they were married.

Ozzie was articulate and intelligent with the manner of a college student about him. His band was musical and well disciplined, but according to the critics, not very exciting. Nelson fans would challenge the critics on that point.

The band featured a warm ensemble sound with two pianos, rich warm brass section, and a full bodied sax section. Besides Harriet Hilliard, other vocalists at different times were Shirley Lloyd and Rosanne Stevens. The band's theme song was "Loyal Sons of Rutgers". The style of the band changed little over the years.

As a vocalist, Ozzie was described as a slightly hip Rudy Vallee. He once said, "I got myself a megaphone, learned all of Rudy's songs and didn't object in the least when someone would call up and

ask if I were the guy who sang like Rudy Vallee". He even played the saxophone; same as Rudy.

Ozzie didn't smoke, drink, or wear a hat. He was described as a super-mediocre-malted-milk-with-two-scoops-of-ice-cream-drinker.

The recordings he made in the 1930's are still played on radio now and then. Recently, a local station played Ozzie's record of "The Sun Will Shine, About a Quarter to Nine" with Ozzie on the vocal. The sound and the style have long since become outmoded, but in its own time, it wowed the listeners if not the critics.

Ozzie Nelson, his band and vocalist, Harriet Hilliard, appeared on radio on the "Believe It Or Not" show with Robert Ripley on NBC. In 1934 they were the featured orchestra on the "Joe Penner Show". Penner was famous for the catch-phrases "Wanna buy a duck?", "You nasty man", "Don't ever do that". The Penner show was originally called "The Baker's Broadcast". They also were featured on the "Feg Murray Show".

1941 featured the Nelson Band on the new "Red Skelton Show". It was the Skelton show that displayed Harriet's acting ability more so than her vocal talents. As Daisy June and the

"mean widdle kid's" mother, Harriet was heard in virtually every sketch from the "Skelton Scrapbook of Satire". They stayed until 1944 when on October 8, 1944 "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" made its debut on CBS. David Rose and his orchestra replaced the Nelsons on the Skelton Show.

In 1948 their real life sons joined the program replacing the young actors playing the parts of Dave (David Ozzie born in 1936) and Ricky (Eric Hilliard born in 1940). At the start of "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" Ozzie was a bandleader on and off the program. Later on, nothing was said of his occupation. This led to questions like "What does Ozzie do for a living?".

The "Adventures" moved to television in 1952 and stayed until 1966. Young Rick became a rock star during the 1960's. He still sings and Dave is a producer. Ozzie was one of the writers of the show.

1973 saw "Ozzie's Girls" come to TV. Ozzie and Harriet starred with Brenda Sykes and Susan Sennett featured as their boarders. It is now off the air.

Ozzie's movies included: Sweetheart of the Campus-1941, Hi Good Lookin-1944, People are Funny-1945, Here

RADIO through the years

PART FOUR.....Billions of dollars worth of entertainment was available to the radio listener at no cost to him. Hope, Crosby, Benny and Allen all performed for years and the listener paid nothing. Why? Soley because of commercial sponsors and their RADIO SALESPITCH.

Commercialism, in the broadcasting sense was not to take hold until 1922. However, Arnold B. Church, founder and president, at the time, of KMBC, Lamoni, Iowa, was selling radio parts and supplies over the air to other "HAM" operators across the country as early as 1915. This type of radio selling was acceptable because it was advancing the art, a public service.

By the end of 1921, with only eight licensed stations, there existed a situation under which no one was sure how the industry could be supported. Millions of listeners were waiting.

In 1921, only the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. (AT&T) had the telephone lines, skilled technicians, and patents to present to the public the "toll broadcasting idea". That is, to broadcast programs originating in one location and being broadcast in another. The show was transmitted over telephone lines. WBAY in New York was established to broadcast programs on a contract basis. The programs

were not those of WBAY itself, rather they were brought in by the originator to be broadcast over WBAY.

Toll broadcasting brought forth the fact that somebody was paying for a broadcasting service. And, since costs were being incurred, why not advertise, either your product or get a sponsor and plug his product.

The ice was broken, so to speak, when H.M. Blackwell stepped up to the mike at WEAf in New York on August 28, 1922 at 5:15 PM. He spoke of the advantages of living in the Jackson Heights Apartments in New York. That ten minutes at \$10.00 per minute opened the door to station and network survival. It would be a decade later before the radio commercial or sponsor's plug would develop into a well written, one minute commercial.

Today, on radio, you may hear a Campbell's Soup commercial that asks the housewife to sing the Camp-

bell's Soup jingle. Mmmm mmmm Good.....That's what Campbell's Soups are..... If you know it when the man calls, its worth a case of soup. That jingle hasn't changed in all these years.

Early advertising on radio wasn't really a salespitch. It was more in the nature of public information. A company would give a talk on a particular subject or industry and discuss thoroughly the company's activity in and contribution to that industry. Care was taken not to mention store locations, name of products, color of the package or can, size, or price.

By 1931, the radio pitch wasn't subtle anymore. George Washington Hill of the American Tobacco Company felt that commercials should irritate the listener. NBC had a long list of taboo words but Hill found that he could say what he pleased on CBS. To advertise his Cremo cigars, the announcer mentioned the price and loudly proclaimed "there is no spit in Cremo". One wonders what cigar smokers thought the next time they put the other brand cigar in their mouth for their after dinner smoke.

Radio advertising had to be convincing and timely. Strike while the skillet is hot. Radio pitchmen had

to remember who was listening. Sell soup at lunch time, breakfast cereal after school when the kids are home, soap and cosmetics during the day when milady is at home, and cigars and wine at evening time when the mister is at home.

Every legal commodity except hard liquor was sold on radio. Network broadcasting greatly expanded radio advertising for products of nationwide appeal, particularly beer, tobacco products, and gasoline.

Products for the whole family had to be advertised in midevening when the entire family was gathered around the radio. Toothpaste, antacids, and laxatives were sold at night. Family products in the first degree. Beer, coffee, soap and cosmetics for the adults; candy, cereals, soft drinks and shoes for the kids, the radio hucksters hawked them all.

Many commercials strove for product identification instead of exhorting the listener to buy-buy-buy. Repetition was the key in such commercials.

Repeat the name of the product.
Repeat the jingle.
Repeat the name.
Repeat the Premium offer.
Repeat the instruction to go out and buy!

Lucky Strike (American Tobacco Co.) repeated:

LS/MFT, LS/MFT, Lucky Strike means fine tobacco.

Special sounds were also used. Lucky Strike besides using the LS/MFT phrase used the auctioneer's call. Forest E. (F. E.) Boone of Lexington, Kentucky and Lee Aubrey (L.A. "Speed") Riggs of Goldsboro, North Carolina were the auctioneers chanting away on programs like "Jack Benny" and "Hit Parade". At the end came "Sold to.....American".

Van Dyke Cigars came on with a nickel being dropped on the glass top of the cigar showcase. The nickel spins and finally comes to rest...the announcer tells the imaginary clerk behind the imaginary showcase "Van Dykes please". Another announcer cuts in "Van Dykes always please". Cigar showcases are still with us but the nickel cigar is part of history.

Sounds played an important part in other commercials. The foghorn for Lifebuoy Soap called out Beeeeooooo. And 30 years ago, everybody knew that "BO" stood for "body odor".

Tobacco and soap seemed to dominate the radio commercials.

The singing commercial

showed up around 1932. Billy Jones and Ernie Hare at that time were the Interwoven Pair for Interwoven Sox. Jones and Hare sang their little ditty which wasn't much of a salespitch but mentioned the sponsor. It is thought to be the first singing commercial.

In the following years the more famous singing commercials belonged to Pepsi-Cola, Super Suds, Barbasol Shave Cream, Halo Shampoo, and for the kids, Cream of Wheat sponsor of "Let's Pretend".

A lot of commercials used music but were not really the singing commercial. The FBI in Peace and War was sponsored by Lava Soap with theme music being the "March" from "Love for Three Oranges". The commercial started out L-A-V-A, L-A-V-A.....

Some commercials featured lyrics advertising the product but the melody was that of a once famous song. Barbasol shave cream was sung by Singing Sam the Barbasol Man, the tune was Tamanny. Lustre Creme Shampoo used "Toyland". Some of the singing commercials on radio even became popular songs like Chiquita Banana.

A drama explosion on radio in 1933 gave rise to the dramatized commercial.

Continued on page 27

FRANK MUNN

THE GOLDEN VOICE OF RADIO

Frank Munn - The Golden Voice of Radio was reared by his grandmother after both parents died when he was still a baby. His father was a policeman.

He went to work as a shuttle boy in an embroidery factory for \$3.00 a week. It was said his singing career began then when he would hum to the cadence of the machinery.

However he started, he would learn to sing his songs by listening to recordings. He couldn't read music. He sang in amateur concerts, neighborhood recreation clubs, and churches.

Young Frank was heard by NBC conductor Gustave Haenschen who offered him \$300 to record "Little Mother O' Mine" for Brunswick. His professional career was launched.

Frank's radio debut was in December, 1923, on the Brunswick Hour of Music. It was then he was dubbed the "Golden Voice of Radio".

Four years later he would be "Paul Oliver" on the Palmolive Hour. The pseudonym would be short lived

for Frank Munn. Palmolive seemed obsessed with naming characters after the company; in 1934, Virginia Rea would be "Olive Palmer" on the Palmolive Beauty Box Theatre starring Fanny Brice.

In 1931, Frank Munn was engaged by Frank Hummert of Hummert Radio Features as soloist on the "American Album of Familiar Music" on NBC sponsored by Bayer Aspirin. Here he remained as well as on the Friday night "Waltz Time" started two years later.

He also appeared on the Lavender and Old Lace Show with Fritz Scheff on NBC in 1934.

Frank Munn retired in 1946. He entertained exclusively on radio and recordings shunning night clubs, concert halls, theatres and movies. He always had a commercial sponsor.

On October 1, 1953, while visiting the home of his brother-in-law, Frank Munn collapsed and died. The "Golden Voice of Radio" was stilled. His wife Anne was with him at the time of his death. Frank Munn was 58.

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Spinning the dial

On Aug. 8 a new radio show entitled "Radio Playhouse" was to make its national debut in some 60 markets from coast to coast. Aired 5 days a week for 1 hour it will offer 2 soap operas, a light comedy and an adaptation of a novel or play in serial form.

The "soapers" are "The Faces of Love" about a liberated young woman and "To Have and To Hold" regarding 3 generations of a family. The comedy segment is "The Little Things In Life", funny vignettes about life's small frustrations. The 4th part of the hour is called "Author's Studio".

* * * * *

Subscribers in the Milwaukee area should know that beginning in September, the "Sounds of Yesterday" show will change both time and format. Jed Dolnick's show on WUWM-FM will feature OTR from 6:30 to 7:30 and then from 7:30 to 8:00 he'll feature music from the big band era on a show called "The Talking Machine". Jed is also instrumental in a new OTR club being formed in the Milwaukee area.

* * * * *

A club based in Hollywood,

The Society To Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety & Comedy (SPERDVAC) is growing by leaps and bounds. Starting in November, 1974 with 19 members it now boasts over 100 and is still growing. They have a great lending library and hold monthly meetings which attract large turn-outs.

Anyone interested in more information can write to:

James Coontz
President SPERDVAC
P.O. Box 1587
Hollywood, CA 90028

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Harvey Gerber, an assistant principal in the New York school system, tells us that he began an "elective" program in old time radio thru the English Department. It started with Jr. High students but has been so successful that their parents asked him to form a group for them.

* * * * *

Still another club, Radio Collectors of America, has been organized in the Boston area. It also meets monthly and would welcome new members with open arms. For information write:

Dick Sullivan, President
Radio Collectors of America
68 Hillock Street
Roslindale MA 02131

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ON THE AIR

RADIO HISTORIAN MAGAZINE would like its readers to submit information for this column regarding stations in their areas that are currently broadcasting old time radio shows. We will be happy to list them. Please include city, station call letters, (along with Khz or Mhz numbers), day and time of broadcast. A brief description of the format and whether or not shows are uninterrupted, would be helpful along with any comments about cue-ins etc.

Seattle WA KVI 570 daily at 7:05, 1 hr. of OTR. Interrupted by local commercials. Poor cue-in and cue-out. "Theater of the Mind".

Milwaukee, Wis. Sun. 6:30 8:00 PM WUWM (FM 89.7) Selected shows 1st hour. Last 1/2 hour called the Talking Machine features big band music from 30's and 40's. Presented by Jed Dolnick. Uninterrupted after show has started. Cue-in and cue-out good.

Chicago, Ill. Sundays 8:35 PM WGN (AM 720) Selected half hour show each week. Presented as part of the Floyd Brown Show. Uninterrupted after show has started. Cur-in and cue-out are acceptable.

Grand Rapids, Mich. WYON FM 1013 Tuesday and Thursday-7:30 PM, Good In-cues, Poor Out-cues. Interrupted with local commercials. Miscellaneous old shows.

We have been informed the following stations broadcast OTR. We suggest you check your local newspaper listing for details. We were not provided with information regarding dates and times of broadcast and commercial breaks.

Oswego NY WRVO-FM 89.9

Rochester NY WCMF-FM 96.5

Ithaca NY WHCU-FM 97.3

Kingston Ont Can CKLC-FM

Rome NY WKAL AM & FM 1450 95.9

Madison WI WTSO 1070

Syracuse WCNY-FM 91.3

Salt Lake City KVER-FM 90.1

Bowling Green OH WBGU-FM

Valparaiso IN WAKE

Decatur GA WQAK 1310

Chicago IL WBEZ-FM 106.3

Lansing IL WLNR-FM

Washington DC WAMU-FM 88.5

Washington DC WETA-FM 90.9

Baltimore MD WBJC-FM 91.5

Pr Frederick MD WMJS-FM 92.7

Washington DC WMOD-FM 98.7

BUY - SELL - TRADE

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING RATES

"SWAPPERS" COLUMN IS FREE OF CHARGE AS LONG AS NO SPECIFIC SHOW OR SERIES NAMES ARE USED. SEND INFORMATION AS YOU WANT IT PRINTED, INCLUDING METHOD USED FOR RECORDING, CATALOG AVAILABILITY, ETC.

"WANTED TO BUY", "WANTED TO SELL", "WANTED TO TRADE" ADS WHICH MENTION NAMES OF SHOWS OR SERIES WANTED BY SPECIFIC NAME ARE 10¢ A WORD. FULL NAME AND ADDRESS OF AD PLACER IS COUNTED AS 7 WORDS OR 70¢.

SAME RATE APPLIES TO MISC. ADS, INCLUDING "FOR SALE" ADS FOR SUPPLIES, LOGS, TAPE, SERVICES, OR OTHER EQUIPMENT.

TRADERS ADS-SWAPPERS

When writing copy for any ad please use the following codes for method of recording

Open Reel 1/4 Track - 0/4
Open Reel 1/2 Track - 0/2
Cassette - C
8 Track - 8

WANTED TO SELL

Cathedral radio rubber stamp \$7.00 send check or money order to Mr. & Mrs. Joe R. Crawford, 201 E Chapman Ave. #315 Placentia CA 92670

Over 5000 hours old radio programs available on reels or cassettes. Sell/trade. Catalog 35¢. Also comics.

Mags, Big Little Books. Movie items, books(i.e. The Big Broadcast postpaid \$12.95. Lists 15¢. Ken Pierce, 344 Winnebago, Park Forest IL 60466

WANTED TO TRADE

Collect drama, mystery, suspense in particular (also sci-fi). Have about 1600 shows. Interested in adding most anything. Solomon E. Feldman 119 Pooler Ave. De Kalb, IL 60115

Over 4000 hours available on 0/4-0/2 reels and cassettes. Ken Pierce, 344 Winnebago, Park Forest IL 60466

Sherlock Holmes radio shows. Particularly those with Rathbone & Bruce on cassette Also have large collection of other shows on cassette and would be glad to swap with others with similar interests. David D. Decker P.O. Box 534, Bryn Mawr PA 19010

Bob and Ray, Dave and Charlie, Smile Time, Stoopnagle and Budd. Trade only Ward Erwin, 2049 Laven, Lakeland FL 33801

Science fiction, comedy, and detective shows. Robert Bialecki, 2959 N. Bremen St. Milwaukee WI 53212

SWAPPERS

Mickey Smith
School of Pharmacy
University of Mississippi
Oxford MS 38677

Dave Reznick 981 Cumberland Court Foster City CA 94404

Radio Bands continued
from page 19

Come the Nelsons-1952, Love and Kisses-1965, and The Impossible Years-1968. Harriet's movies include: Follow the Fleet-1936, She's My Everything-1938, Sweetheart of the Campus-1941, and Canal Zone-1942.

Super-mediocre; Ozzie's one time description was half right. For over forty years we have seen the Nelsons in virtually every aspect of show business. Always successful and always popular.

On Tuesday, June 3, 1975, Ozzie Nelson died of cancer in his Hollywood home at the age of 69. With him at the end were his wife and sons, the family that millions heard on radio and watched grow up on TV.

Radio Through The Years
continued from page 22

The Johnson's Wax program with Fibber Mc Gee and Molly was famous for weaving the commercial right into the program content. Harlow Wilcox, the announcer, would be one of the many visitors to 79 Wistful Vista. And when Harlow walked in, the conversation would always lead into a commercial.

And yet, the pitch wasn't always thought to be successful by itself. The listeners had to be offered other incentives to buy. The premium offer became the ultimate in enticements for the listeners.

Money - saving coupons for the housewife to get a reduced price on the next package she bought were common. Coupons were also used to encourage the ladies to try a sister product of the same sponsor. This was a good way to introduce new products.

However, most of us only remember the premiums offered on the kids' shows. How many of us sent for the Captain Midnight decoder or the deed to one square inch of land in the Yukon Territory? Today, these premiums are among the most valuable of collectibles.

Next issue....The Premium Offer.

Film Documentary
continued from page 7

humanities classes, for college groups studying radio history, and it has obvious nostalgic uses in public library programs. It is ideal for showing at any gathering of OTR fans!

If you move, please don't forget to notify RADIO HISTORIAN of your new address so that we can change our subscription labels. It will insure that you receive all future issues of RADIO HISTORIAN on time.